

SHORT COMMUNICATION

Is the leafhopper *Platymetopius undatus* (Hemiptera, Cicadellidae) extinct in Britain?
Most leafhoppers are fairly insignificant looking insects and only relatively few species are noticed by non-specialists in the group. However, the striking brown and yellow leafhopper *Platymetopius undatus* (DeGeer) (Fig. 1) could not easily be mistaken for anything else. Curiously, it does not seem to have been found for around 50 years, even though it was formerly known from a wide scatter of localities across southern Britain (Fig. 2).

There are around 50 *Platymetopius* species known in the Palaearctic but *P. undatus* is one of the few species that occur in northern latitudes. The habitat requirements of the species remain obscure (Kirby, P. 1992. *A Review of the Scarce and Threatened Hemiptera of Great Britain*. JNCC). Host plant associations are generally poorly documented. Early British records refer to specimens caught off trees such as oak and sallow, but also from lower vegetation such as bracken. It is possible that it is one of a number of species in which the nymphs emerge and feed on low-growing herbaceous vegetation but the adults migrate up into trees where they tend to elude collectors. Most records are from woodland habitats, often in open clearings. Adults have been recorded from June to September.

It would be strange if such a distinctive species had been consistently overlooked for such a long time, suggesting that perhaps it has gone extinct in Britain. However, there are no obvious reasons why this should have happened, since neither the habitat nor the putative host plants are rare. We would very much like to learn of any records that readers might have, especially of recently-found specimens, although all records would be welcomed. Contact: Dr A. J. A. STEWART, School of Biological Sciences, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton, Sussex BN1 9QG, UK or Dr M. R. WILSON, Dept of Biodiversity & Systematic Biology, National Museums & Galleries of Wales, Cardiff CF10 3NP, UK.

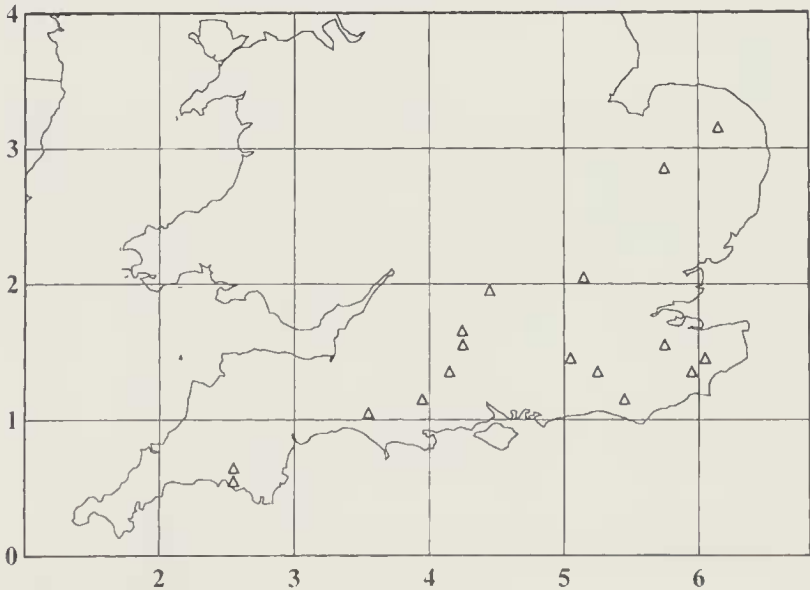


Figure 2 10-km square distribution based on data in Auchenorhyncha Recording Scheme. All records are pre-1960.

Figure 1 *Platymetopius undatus* (Hemiptera, Cicadellidae) body 5–8 mm in length.